

KOJI KANEMOTO! whumps ass against TAKAIWA! HEY! i thought USWA! was gonna suck!
LANCE STORM! against TRACY SMOTHERS! and other things I saw.

Howdy!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER #46! Golly! What a PHAT-ASS week of wrestling related activities. It started with a roadtrip to see Phil, Cheetah and KING OF THE CREASE Jeremy Billones. I showed up early so we could watch the Samurai Debut thing that had INOKI vs GASPAR the PIRATE!! We watched the WHOMP ASS Ikeda/(bad-haired)Ono vs Otsuka/somebody who slips my mind right now match and GOLLY! that was almost as good as BattlARTS gets, as it was stiff as hell, fun as crap and cool as heck. Ono is such the bomb and Otsuka was a suplex machine for once. Ikeda was truly king-sized, laying the boots to whoever was in range and instilling the psychology that is making him the fun part of All Japan these days. The Koji Kitoa vs Mabel was amazing. Yep. They're both really fat. Yep. The Michinoku Match was AWESOME as you would expect, but also Yakushiji was Juventudesque in the speed of his multi-rotation armdrags. Sasuke was the perfect punching bag and Dick Togo ruled it as is his wont. The pinnacle of the highspots in this one was the double tope suicida with Yakushiji ending up in the second row. There was a Judo match with a chubby white who looked like he forgot to wear pants. AWESOME!! Jeremy was late because he had to get some dentistry done after yet another glove dropping incident on the ice.:) Me and Cheetah and Phil ate at the Cheesecake Factory in DC and we watched Phil eat the worlds fattest salad (three heads at least) and made our neighboring diners uncomfortable by yammering about wrestling for the entire time. We went back to Phil massive bachelor pad and met up with Jeremy and watched a big batch of wrestling. We watched a REALLY choice "King of the Iron Claw" Mitsuahara Misawa vs Jumbo Tsuruta match from 1991 and Jumbo beats the living crap out of the overly-spunky-at-that-point Mitsuahara. I'm assuming that deep stoicism would follow in the Man's career. Jumbo hits three bone-bashing backdrops that had to suck. I see where the spine-fusing All Japan tradition began. Jumbo was the greatest ever. We then watch a mountain of Lucha including the 16 man and assorted other stuff as Phil attempted to telekinetically tell what was on any of the thirty or so UNMARKED wrestling videos strewn across the floor. We are still amazed that Cheetah and Jeremy STILL hadn't seen the Juventud 37,0000 foot tope.:) Jeremy leaves mid-Caida and me and Cheetah hang out with the young punk for a while longer enjoying wrestling fellowship together and after a while we went back to our normal, non-wrestling intensive lives (yeah right). The next day I spoke to Glenn who was plying his rulingness to the US of A and tearing up the Keno lounges in Reno (I think that's what he said.:)) The next day the Glenn Tape arrived. WOO-HOO!

-7/5 GAEA Champ Forum 7/5/97

This is a weird one. It has to shoot fights with Meiko Satomura vs (former?)OZ-ite Hiromi Kato and Sonoko Kato vs Makie Numao. They are pushing Numao as a shootstyle badass type and this helped that along I guess though it exposed Kato as not being as good at that style as they led us to believe. Neither of these are too bad I guess, but I would have preferred actual pro style matches between these four, but a weird change of pace I guess. The elimination match

between Chigusa/Yamada/Satomura/Sonoko/ Numao vs Sugar Sato/ Nagashima/ H.Kato/ Matsumoto/Uematsu was a lot of fun. I couldn't figure out why Uematsu and Matsumoto were doing on the same side as such OZ luminaries though I guess GAEA has reclaimed all her youngsters and is leaving the Ozaki-inspired fun to the old women. Pretty active match with Uematsu being bitchier than Sugar which is upsetting. Great ending as Yamada ends up with a batch of youngsters. Overall, I liked it, but I'm a freak. You may want to ease into this one after many other tapes before.

-NEW JAPAN TV 7/5/97

Shinjiro Ohtani/Koji Kanemoto vs Liger/Honaga was really good, though not quite as spectacular as what these four have been involved in lately. Kanemoto and Liger are magic in the ring as they trade hellish released German Suplexes. Honaga continues to be a weird hybrid of Arn Anderson and Gran Hamada. Ohtani is otherworldly as usual, though he oversells the hell out of a powerbomb and a palmthrust. He hits a choice springboard missile dropkick and actually hits a Liger-Killer Powerbomb. Liger was divine as ever- selling Kanemoto's crushing suplexes like a pro and balancing the dick quotient by spitting at Ohtani while Shinjiro is standing on the apron. Honaga is growing on me quite a bit and he assumes the role as oldest, wildest veteran. The blown ending didn't help any. Takaiwa jobs to some guy I have never seen before. He was very alright but why is Takaiwa putting him over? All that and the amazing nWo Sting who gets better every tape. This time around he perfects his top rope lariat.

-NEW JAPAN TV 7/12/97

This was another weird one. Liger/El Samurai vs Nogami/Kobayashi was kinda off-handed and kinda pointless. It was well wrestled as one would imagine but Nogami and Kobayashi are so overmatched in this match that they have to go full bore and Liger and Samurai dumb their match down a notch to accomodate these cats. It worked though as this was kinda entertaining in a WCW Pro kinda way. Kanemoto vs Takaiwa ROCKED THE FUCKING WORLD. Takaiwa hits about every cool suplex and powerbomb on earth and also hits the Neverending suplex that is becoming the DieHard Kansai into a Hurricanrana of 1997. Kanemoto does all of his cool stuff and takes his game to another level (if that's possible) by selling the Death Valley Driver LIKE A KING. I'm guessing he said, "Hey fatboy, the cameras are rolling and I killed Samurai last time. Slam me on my neck REALLY hard and we'll call it even." Takaiwa is becoming everything he promised last year- the cool-ass powerman of the young punks. The post-match is truly MAN-SIZED. Koji Kanemoto is the best wrestler on earth at the current moment.

nWo Sting outworks everybody in his match. Muta is fun in this one. No one does a heartpunch and that's something.

-ALL JAPAN TV 7/13/97

Hase/Ikeda vs Kikuchi/Shiga was a giant step backwards for everyone involved. Hase, the greatest Heavyweight in New Japan History, looked like crap- slow and very not crisp. Ikeda was clipped out of a lot of the match which was bad for Shiga since Ikeda and Ono are the only ones in All Japan with enough balls to sell for him. The Kikuchi vs Ikeda feud which I'm supposing they are shooting for wasn't advanced at all. ME NOT WANT TO SEE HASE vs

KOBASHI. Kawada/Taue/Ogawa vs Kobashi/Smith/Mossman was good for Mossman and Kawada mixing it up. The rest sucked. These guys don't care anymore.

-GAEA Champ Forum 7/19/97

This was pretty cool all the way through. Chigusa vs Rina Ishii was strange because Chigusa broke her irritating string of beating the crap out of the youngsters by actually selling a whole bunch for the unheralded lisha. lisha is spunky as hell and quite a decent mat technician and Chigusa guided her along to a credible story of Ishii alternating between massive underdog taking a beating to credible aggressor hitting decent leg submissions. KAORU/Hokuto vs Yamada/Numao was pretty nifty as Yamada continues to love her new promotional move by delivering the goods in this low-impact, but very good match. Hokuto beats the crap out of Numao and its really cool when Akira and Yamada start tangling. KAORU returns to eternal jobber role, which diminishes her rulingness not one iota. I'm wondering why Hokuto wasn't with either of her proteges- Toshie Uematsu or Matsumodo. The final match- Satomura/Sonoko/Uematsu/Hirota vs Sugar/Nagashima/Matsumoto/H.Kato was a load of goofy fun as these tiny gals put on quite a spunky match. Uematsu in with Sato and Nagashima is the highlight as Toshie hits her wilder lucha stuff and also gets all pouty and vixenlike. Sugar continues her coolness slide as her wrestling skills double as she is quite dynamic setting up her figure-four out a dragon screw finisher. Meiko Satomura shows why she is still the most talented of the GAEA homegrown youngsters by frantically being as shootstyle as she wants to be. This was all great fun but I wish they would try and get back to something as focused and spectacular as the OZ Academy feud. Yeah, GET ALL THIS.

-ECW TV JULY

My Brother-In-Law Lee and MASTER OF ALL THINGS WHOMP ASS-Walt sent me a big batch of current ECW and, as usual, it was quite the mixed bag. I'll get the bad out of the way to end this on a positive tip. This TAZ crap sucks. Louie Spicolli can wrestle circles around this load and he's putting him over in 35 seconds? Who books this shit? And thanks for the classy Tommy Dreamer's Testicle angle. Boy! That's Hardcore! Remind me not to get the Pay Per View! And Rick Rude is awful as a commentator. The thing that made Joey Styles cool was that it was just him and he talked about the match. I'm really tired of all these stiffs in ECW. On the positive tip, the PG-13 vs Mikey Whipreck/Spike Dudley match was great. I had only seen a little of PG-13 and this was great. PG-13 are so homemade in their wrestling inventiveness that one has to be impressed. Mikey Whipreck is the best wrestler in ECW currently and he is already on the way to being ultra-fantabulous. He and Spike were equally as impressive in a much more conventional way, in that they ape more conventional highflyers whereas you can tell that PG-13 figured all theirs out on their own. If these four are on the PPV, I might get it. Lance Storm vs Full-Blooded Italian Tracy Smothers was about as good as you can get. This had everything you could want, in that it was a lot like the PG-13/Whipreck-Spike match- Storm is so much of a Stampede-WAR-UD-Benoit vein of wrestler and Smothers is so deeply a Southern Redneck Ass-kicker vein of wrestler and both are great workers so if these elements are all thrown together, you get a match as cool as this one. Lance Storm is so high-impact that he should breakthrough any moment now. Tracy Smothers is the great lost Southern wrestler. If this

rematch is on the PPV I might get. The Candido/Douglas/Bigelow vs Pitbulls/Balls Mahoney match was booked so over the top that it actually worked which is fortunate since these are all guys who aren't afraid to stink up the joint if given half a chance. The Dudley/Eliminators/Gangsters run-in kept everybody's mind off the fact that nobody wins when Shane Douglas and Balls Mahoney take it to the mat.

-USWA July 1997

HEY! This stuff is GREAT! Well. Okay, it's not great, but it's so Mid-Atlantic 1976. Except that Brian Christopher isn't afraid to shoot on Billie Joe Travis and blurt out Travis's reallife history as a deadbeat dad. THAT WAS INCREDIBLY HARDCORE. These guys should have a PPV instead. There was actually a couple of decent wrestling matches, the best being PG (formerly Aldo PJ Montoya Walker) Walker vs Flash Flanagan. This was impressive as these guys ape their favorite WCW Cruiserweights- which is ALWAYS a good thing. Both these guys should be on RAW wrestling Tajiri already. Hell, I'd watch. I await more from these two and look forward to more weirdness from Brian Christopher (and hell when you take a bigger bump than TAKA Michinoku in a match with TAKA Michinoku you INSTANTLY gain my respect.) USWA also has a vast array of horrible stiff (Spellbinder aka Phantasio, Diesel, MABEL) but HELL! so did Mid-Atlantic.:)

NEXT WEEK: LOTS AND LOTS OF WRESTLING! YESSSS!!!! LUCHA! GAEA! LUCHA LUCHA LUCHA! JAPAN 91! WHOMP ASS!

NANIWA (Heal quick!)-!

Dean Rasmussen, Digging Alex Wright the most since he got all experimental at the end of his little dance with the Nitro girls.